

A Fresh Look at Maariv

The pasuk in the box below is quoted by the Gemara in B'rachot in support of the idea that Yaakov Avinu "established" Maariv, the evening prayer. Literally, the verse is telling us that Yaakov "encountered the place" and slept there, because night had fallen. In addition to the plain meaning, the Gemara quotes a second verse from Yirmiyahu (7:16), to present the idea that "encounter" also means "to pray". Ironically, the pasuk in Yirmiyahu is negative: "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up cry nor prayer for them, nor MAKE INTERCESSION to me (TIFGA BI); for I will not hear." Be that as it may, the connection is thus made: Evening time, Yaakov, encounter=pray... MAARIV.

Without going into details, Maariv originally had a "less than required" status. This has changed - Maariv in our time is as required as Shacharit and Mincha. The majority of opinions is that women are exempt from davening Maariv, but they have permission to do so, if they choose. (A woman who decides to daven Maariv should say that she is not accepting it as a daily commitment, that she is doing it B'li Neder. If this becomes a practical issue, check things out with your Rav.)

There are so many details being glossed over in this Lead Tidbit; all we promised was a Fresh Look. And here it is. Although we line up the davenings of the day as Shacharit, Mincha, and Maariv - corresponding to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and although most Siddurim put the davenings in that order as well, the fact is that Maariv is the first davening of a person's new day. Together with the recitation of the Sh'ma of the night, these two mitzvot are (or at least, can be) our first mitzvot of the new day.

There are plenty of reasons that people have - some better than others - for not davening Maariv right at the end of sunset, when the stars start to come out. But it is praiseworthy and spiritually uplifting to try to daven Maariv at the first opportunity - Z'RI-ZIM MAKDIMIM L'MITZVOT, enthusiastic Jews do their mitzvot right away.

Word of the Month

A weekly feature of Torah Tidbits to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby better fulfilling the mitzva of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

To reiterate: during the winter months, clouds often foil our attempts to say Kiddush L'vana on various nights. We require more diligence and commitment to KL, to be able to say it every month. This is especially so in locations with more rain, snow, and clouds than other places. But if KL is described as "greeting the Divine Presence", that we should be more than fair-weather friends of HaShem.

By this past Monday night, it was KL time for all opinions. So if you haven't said it this month yet, go to it.

Last opportunity for KL any month is the time of the average Nigud, which is half way from one molad to the next. This month, the Nigud will be Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 3:06pm Israel time. That means that KL can be said as late as all night Monday.



Torah Tidbits Audio
www.ouradio.org • www.israelnationalradio.com



Correct for TT 742 • Rabbeinu Tam (l'm) - 5:51pm

4:00pm	Jerusalem	5:14pm
4:15pm	Raanana	5:14pm
4:16pm	Beit Shemesh	5:15pm
4:15pm	Netanya	5:14pm
4:16pm	Rehovot	5:15pm
3:55pm	Petach Tikva	5:14pm
4:15pm	Modi'in	5:14pm
4:17pm	Be'er Sheva	5:16pm
4:14pm	Gush Etzion	5:14pm
4:15pm	Ginot Shomron	5:14pm
4:00pm	Maale Adumim	5:13pm
4:16pm	K4 & Hevron	5:15pm
4:01pm	Tzfat	5:10pm

OTHER Z'MANIM

Correct for Jerusalem

Ranges are FRI-FRI • 10-17 Kislev • (Dec 1-8)

Earliest Talit & T'filin - 5:27-5:32am
Sunrise - 6:21-6:26½am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma - 8:54-8:58am (8:07-8:11am)
Sof Z'man T'fila - 9:45-9:49am (9:14-9:17am)
Chatzot (halachic noon) - 11:28-11:31am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) - 11:59a-12:01p
Plag Mincha - 3:31-3:32pm
Sunset - 4:40-4:40½ (4:35-4:35pm)

In the Wolinetz Family Shul
OHEL SHMUEL (entrance floor)
Shabbat Shiur 3:00pm Mincha 4:00
Rabbi Chanoch Yeres
Motza'ei Shabbat 8:15pm
Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

The OU Israel Center and Torah Tidbits do not necessarily endorse the political or halachic positions of its editor, columnists, or advertisers, nor do we guarantee the quality of advertised services or products

OU ISRAEL CENTER

Seymour J. Abrams • Orthodox Union
Jerusalem World Center

Yitzchak Fund, President
Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Senior Vice President
Prof. Meni Koslowsky, Vice President
Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Vaad member
Stuart Hershkowitz, Vaad member
Moshe Kempinski, Vaad member
Sandy Kestenbaum, Vaad member
Zvi Sand, Vaad member
Harvey Wolinetz, Vaad member

Rabbi Avi Berman, Director-General, OU in Israel
Menachem Persoff, Director of Programs, Israel Center
Phil Chernofsky, Educational Director and TT editor
22 Keren HaYesod • POB 37015 • Jerusalem 91370
phone: (02) 566 7787 • fax: (02) 561-7432
email: tt@ou.org • website: www.ou.org/torah/tt
Orthodox Union • National Conference of Synagogue Youth
Torah Tidbits and many of the projects the Israel Center are assisted by grants from The Jewish Agency for Israel
Produced and printed in-house at the Israel Center



This Shabbat is the 71st day (of 355) and the eleventh Shabbat (of 51) of 5767

וַיַּעַל בְּמִקּוֹם וַיִּכַּן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ... בראשית כח:יא

Let us honor Yaakov Avinu, who taught us to pray at night - literal night and figurative, as well, by taking Maariv more seriously. Start your day right, with acceptance of the Yoke of Heaven and strengthening of our relationship with G-d, via Kavana-filled prayer.



Kohen - First Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 28:10-22

[S> 28:10 (148)] Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and goes to Haran.

SDT There are different explanations concerning the wording of this pasuk. As to why the Torah mentions Yaakov's departure (especially having mentioned it a couple of times at the end of Toldot), Rashi explains that a prominent person not only influences his surroundings, but his absence from a place is also felt, in a negative way. Therefore, the Torah not only tells us that Yaakov went to Haran; it also tells us that he left Be'er Sheva, and his absence was felt - even though Yitzchak (and Rivka) remained there. (Perhaps, especially because Yitzchak and Rivka remained in Be'er Sheva - they would feel Yaakov's absence the most!)

Another explanation - In leaving Be'er Sheva, Yaakov was fulfilling the wishes of his mother Rivka, who feared that Eisav would kill Yaakov if he remained. In going to Haran, Yaakov was fulfilling the wishes of his father, Yitzchak (and also his mother's), who sent him there to find a suitable wife. The pasuk tells us of Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva AND his journey to Haran, to show us that it was important to satisfy the wishes of BOTH his parents. (Apparently, Rivka did not tell Yitzchak about the danger to Yaakov if he were to remain home.)

He encounters "The Place" (it is unidentified in the text, but is traditionally considered to be Har Moriah, the site of the Akeida, and the location of the future Beit HaMikdash) and stays the night. He dreams of a ladder with its feet planted in the ground and whose top reaches the heavens. Angels are ascending and descending the ladder.

SDT The S'fat Emet points out that the ladder in Yaakov's dream is described first as having its feet planted on the ground (representing worldliness and/or basic decency) and then its head reaching the heavens (representing spiritual pursuits). This is consistent with the famous maxim from Pirkei Avot - Derech Eretz Kodma laTorah, worldliness (should) precedes Torah.

This represents the "Changing of the Guard". Angels that accompanied Yaakov in Eretz Yisrael are not the same as those outside Israel, just as Shabbat angels differ from those of weekdays. Our weekly counterpart to Yaakov's dream is the Friday night song, Shalom Aleichem, which refers to the changing of the angels. (Note that in Shalom Aleichem, we greet the Shabbat angels before saying farewell to the weekday angels. This gives us an overlap of angels rather than an angel-less gap. In Yaakov's dream, the angels are spoken of as ascending and descending, leaving a momentary gap. Commentaries point out that G-d was "standing watch" over Yaakov from the top of the ladder because there was a gap between the ascension of the angels and the descending of the new ones - OLIM (and then) V'YORDIM BO.

A person should realize that wealth is not permanent; it can be lost as easily as it is gained. Therefore, if one is blessed with

Vayeitzei STATS

Written on 235.3 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 12

Vayeitzei is one single long (closed) Parsha, which fits with the fact that it is a continuation of the To-l'dot story. It is the Torah's longest closed parsha, and second only to the open parsha that is all of Mikeitz (254.6 lines)

148 p'sukim - rank: 6th (3rd in B'reishit)

2021 words - ranks 4th (3rd in B'reishit)

7512 letters - ranks 5th (3rd in B'reishit)

דסעזומ

None of the TARYAG are found in Vayeitzei

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

wealth, he should use it wisely, constructively, charitably. This idea is symbolized by the ladder, and the ups and downs that take place on it - the SULAM, with the angels OLIM V'YORDIM BO. SULAM (ladder) is numerically $60+6+30+40=136$. MAMON (money) is also $40+40+6+50=136$. And so is ONI (poverty) $70+6+50+10=136$.

More... KOL, voice (prayer) and TZOM, fasting are also equal to 136, perhaps saying that prayer and petition of G-d can be effective in resulting in a blessing of wealth rather than one's being poor.

In the dream, G-d appears to Yaakov at the head of the ladder and reiterates to him the promises He made to Avraham and Yitzchak. These oft-repeated promises have consistently included the possession of the Land and the "countless" nature of their descendants. This prophecy also includes G-d's promise of protection for Yaakov on his sojourn.

Yaakov awakens from his sleep and acknowledges the sanctity of the Place. When Yaakov awakens in the morning, he takes the stone (formerly referred to in the plural) that was at his head, and erects it as a monument which he then anoints. He names the place Beit El. Yaakov vows allegiance to G-d.

Shulchan Aruch, based on Midrash, says that a person should/can take a vow or make a pledge to increase and enhance performance of mitzvot and giving of tzedaka during troubled times. The precedent for this is Yaakov's vows at this "low point" in his life. This is notwithstanding the recommendation to avoid taking vows. Tzedaka is another story (sort of).

"And I will return to my father's home and HaShem will be for me G-d." Ramban explains the connection between Yaakov's return home with his "acquisition of G-d". The Gemara in Ketuvot states that he who lives in Eretz Yisrael is like one who has G-d; he who lives outside Israel is like one without G-d. Yaakov's return from Lavan's house to his father's was a physical and spiritual Aliya - as is Aliya to Eretz Yisrael in our own time.

Levi - Second Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 29:1-17

Assured of G-d's protection upon leaving the Land (something Yaakov had reason to be unsure of), his pace quickens. He sees a well in a field, with three flocks of sheep gathered around. The well is covered by a large rock. It was the practice of the shepherds to gather at the same time each day so that they would have the manpower necessary to remove the rock and then replace it after the sheep drank. (This, to prevent water from being stolen by one shepherd or another.) Yaakov asks the shepherds who they are and why they gather so early in the afternoon to water the sheep.

When they tell him that they work for Lavan, Yaakov asks about his well-being. The shepherds point out the approaching Rachel, daughter of Lavan. They explain to Yaakov that they must cooperate with each other in order to physically remove the stone from the well. Just then, Yaakov sees Rachel, his cousin, and approaches the


rock and single-handedly removes it from the mouth of the well in order to give water to his uncle's sheep. Yaakov kisses Rachel and weeps bitterly. (He weeps because he sees with Ru'ach HaKodesh that they are destined not to be buried together.)

Yaakov tells Rachel who he is - what their relationship is - she runs off to tell her father. When Lavan hears, he runs to welcome Yaakov, and brings him home to tell "the whole story". Lavan "offers" Yaakov a job and tells him "to name his price". Lavan had two daughters - Leah, the older one and Rachel, the younger one. Leah had "weak" (sensitive) eyes and Rachel was very beautiful.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 31 p'sukim - 29:18-30:13

Yaakov loves Rachel and offers to work for seven years in exchange for her hand in marriage. Lavan agrees and the time flies by in Yaakov's eyes because of his great excitement. At the end of the seven years, Yaakov asks that the marriage take place.

Lavan gathers the locals for the festivities and substitutes Leah for Rachel.

 *Although Lavan was the deceiver, and had his own motives, our Sources indicate that it was Rachel who facilitated the switch, motivated by love and compassion for her sister. Rachel gave her private "signals" to Leah to save her from a probable marriage to Eisav, Yitzchak's biological elder. This compassion serves her descendants well many years later, when she "intercedes" before G-d following the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Tradition tells us that G-d "softened" the punishment with a promise of our return, only after Rachel pleaded before Him. According to Tradition, the Avot and Moshe Rabeinu had not succeeded in their pleas on behalf of the people. There was also "knowledge" via some kind of RU'ACH HAKODESH, that was given to Rachel and Leah that "The Tribes of G-d" were to come from more than just Rachel.*

When Yaakov confronts Lavan about the deceit, Lavan says that it is improper to marry off the younger before the older. (this is the minhag in many communities, despite the fact that its origin is Lavan.)

Yaakov agrees to work an additional seven years for Rachel. Zilpa and Bilha are the handmaidens of Leah and Rachel respectively (commentaries say they too were daughters of Lavan, from a pilegesh). Yaakov showed his obviously greater love of Rachel. As a result, G-d made Leah fertile and Rachel barren.

Next the Torah tells us, in rapid succession, of the births of Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehuda. Leah names each son (Levi was named by Yaakov or perhaps by an angel) with a name that expresses her thanks to G-d and her feelings under the unusual circumstances of her life.

Rachel, jealous of Leah, complains to Yaakov that she has no children. Yaakov gets angry with her, saying that it is G-d's doing, not his.

Rachel gives Bilha to Yaakov to have children whom she

will raise as her own. Dan and Naftali are born. Leah, realizing that she has stopped having children, gives Zilpa to Yaakov. Gad and Asher are the results.

SDT Notice the rapid fashion the Torah employs to tell us of the build-up of Yaakov's family. With Avraham and Yitzchak having such a difficult time fathering children, Yaakov has fathered 10 sons in the span of 16 p'sukim!

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 30:14-27

Rachel begs Reuven to give her the special (fertility) herbs (DUDA'IM, mandrake) that he had gathered for his mother, Leah. When Leah complains to her, Rachel promises that Yaakov could sleep with her that night in exchange for the herbs. When Yaakov returns from the fields, it is Leah who goes out to greet him - something Yaakov questions, and Leah explains. G-d answers Leah's prayers of despair, and she gives birth to Yissachar and then Zevulun. Then Leah gives birth to a girl, Dina. Finally, G-d "remembers" Rachel and she too becomes pregnant.

She gives birth and names her son Yosef, praying that she will have yet another son (giving her not fewer than the hand-maidens had).

After Yosef is born, Yaakov asks his leave of Lavan. He desires to return to his fathers' home. He asks for his wives, children, and compensation for all the work he has done for Lavan. Lavan acknowledges that he has been blessed because of Yaakov.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya - 32 p'sukim - 30:28-31:16

They make an arrangement by which Yaakov will be paid. Lavan repeatedly attempts to minimize the births of the goats and sheep that will be Yaakov's. G-d has other plans and Yaakov becomes very wealthy. The details of the speckled, banded, spotted animals and how which gave birth to what, are obscure. The bottom line is that Lavan attempts to cheat Yaakov (again) and is completely unsuccessful. Lavan's sons feel as if Yaakov has cheated their father. G-d tells Yaakov to return to his birthplace. Yaakov calls to his wives and explains the situation to them. He tells them of being instructed by an angel as to what to do with the animals. Rachel and Leah feel as strangers in their father's house, as if they have no share in Lavan's wealth, and they will do as G-d commands.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 31:17-42

Yaakov prepares to leave. Meanwhile, Rachel takes her father's terafim in his absence. When Lavan becomes

aware of Yaakov's departure, he sets out in pursuit. G-d appears to Lavan in a dream and warns him not to harm Yaakov in any way. When Lavan catches up to Yaakov, he confronts him about the unannounced departure and the missing terafim.

Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l in The Living Torah, explains Terafim according to different opinions. Some say they were idols that were worshiped. This opinion adds that Rachel took them to save her father from the sin of idolatry. Others are of the opinion that they were meditative devices that would enable Lavan to divine the whereabouts of Yaakov. Thus Rachel's motive was to prevent Lavan from pursuing Yaakov & Co.

Yaakov answers in kind, expressing his anger at Lavan's repeated attempts to cheat him. As to the terafim, Yaakov permits Lavan to search for them and boldly declares that the one who took them shall not live. Lavan fails to find his terafim because Rachel convinces him not to search her person or belongings. Had it not been for G-d's protection, Yaakov tells Lavan, you would have left me with nothing.

KI VARACH... The Midrash, based on the same phrase being used, says that it was Amalek who told Lavan that Yaakov fled, and later told Par'o that Bnei Yisrael did so too.

In the Hagada we read/say: VAYEIREN MITZ-RAI-MA (Yaakov went down into Egypt), and this is qualified by, ANOOS AL PI HADIBUR, usually translated as Forced by Divine Decree. There is another explanation offered: It was Yaakov's DIBUR, his statement that forced himself down into Egypt. How so? He inadvertently condemned Rachel to an early death by his words to Lavan. This can be construed as taking a life B'SHOGEIG. Punishment (and atonement) for that is EXILE. (Really, to a city of refuge, but for this "drash", exile to Egypt will do.) Not only does this explanation fit the DIBUR part, but it can also explain why the Hagada connects Yaakov's descent into Egypt with Lavan.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 31:43-32:3

Lavan answers that the women are his daughters, that the children are his (grand)children, and the animals are his as well. Yaakov and Lavan make a pact and form a mound of rocks as a sign of their agreement. Yaakov offers a sacrifice to G-d and swears to the covenant. In the morning, Lavan kisses his children and grandchildren, blesses them, and returns home.

Yaakov continues on his journey and encounters angels (of Eretz Yisrael - the sedra thus comes full circle) on the way, Yaakov names the place Macha-nayim. Last 3 p'sukim are Maftir.

Your children know you love them by your presence, not your presents.

from 1001 Smiles
by Marion Kaplinsky

Haftara - 28+2* p'sukim - Hoshe'a 12:13-14:10

S'faradim read the 17-pasuk portion of Hoshea that precedes the Ashkenazi reading, 11:7-12:12. Chabad do also, but they continue for two more p'sukim - namely, the first two p'sukim of the Ashkenazi reading.

*Chayei Adam suggests concluding the haftara with Yoel 2:26-27, in order to end the haftara on a better note than Hoshea ends with.

This concluding portion of the book(let) of Hoshea begins with reference to Yaakov's journey to Aram to find (and work on behalf of) a wife (wives) - hence its obvious connection to the sedra. The prophet points out to the People of Israel their humble origins, in an attempt to put things in perspective and restore their faith and reliance upon G-d.

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW - Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson 357

Jurisdiction of non-ordained judges

In the last lesson it was stated, "From the foregoing it is apparent that the non-ordained judges act as agents or deputies of the ordained judges of old in order to carry out the mandate pursuant to Rabbinic enactment which authorizes them to act in such cases."

We shall now discuss the types of cases over which the non-ordained judges were given jurisdiction to act nowadays when we no longer have ordination. In the last lesson, the non-ordained judges were coercing a husband to give his wife a divorce - a function that was previously limited to courts of ordained judges. The Talmud answered the question of jurisdiction of the non-ordained judges by stating that they were granted jurisdiction over cases that occur frequently. This test was met in the divorce case. The Talmud, however, adds another test, that the case must also involve a loss of money. This second requirement was not relevant in the divorce case and therefore was not mentioned there. We thus have a twofold test when judges who are not ordained may judge cases, the case must: (1) involve a loss of money (to one of the litigants); and (2) must be of a type that occurs frequently.

After ordination lapsed, the Beit Din continued to sit and judge, using the two-part test of frequent occurrence and monetary loss to determine the jurisdiction of the court. We shall now discuss some of the matters over which the present day Beit Din of non-ordained judges have jurisdiction.

The first area of jurisdiction of non-ordained judges concerns commercial matters. Classic examples in this category are cases of loans and admissions. In the latter case at least two witnesses testify that in their presence the debtor admitted the indebtedness. These cases involve commerce and credit and the main reason for liberalizing the Torah requirements that only ordained judges could judge them

was so as "not to close the door to borrowers." There is unanimous agreement among the authorities that the cases of loans and admissions can be judged by non-ordained judges. The only difference of opinion is whether this is due to Rabbinic enactment or whether loans and admissions could have been judged by non-ordained judges even according to Torah law. In addition, Yad Rama on Sanhedrin 32b says that the liberalization under the categories of commercial matters, expands the concept by saying that besides loans and admissions, courts of non-ordained judges have jurisdiction over cases of sales, purchases and inheritances.

A second category of cases included under commercial matters, where jurisdiction is extended to non-ordained judges, deals with monetary matters upon certain relationships. Tosafot states that elaborating on commercial matters they have jurisdiction over the monetary aspects of marriage contracts, cases involving inheritances, and cases involving gifts. Ramban explains that if the court of non-ordained judges did not have jurisdiction over marriage contracts and the debts arising therefrom, the wife would become trivial in her husband's eyes, since he would be able to divorce her and she would have no Beit Din to turn to collect the sums provided for in her marriage contract. This might in some case close the door to marriage.

The second area of judicial functioning wherein the Beit Din of non-ordained judges has jurisdiction involves personal and property damage. One example of personal and property damage is the case of damage caused by "Fire" or "Pit" Damages caused by a pit includes not only the situation where a wrongdoer has dug a hole in a public place, but encompasses all kinds of pitfalls which one might place in public areas.

There is also the jurisdiction of the non-ordained judges over cases dealing with loss of earnings and medical expenses. When one maims another, there are five elements of damages for which he may be liable. These are for permanent injury, pain and suffering, embarrassment, loss of earnings and medical expenses. There is a difference of opinion between Rambam (1135-1204) and Asheri (1250-1327) whether the non-ordained judges may award a judgment for these items. Rambam holds that the non-ordained judges may award a judgment for loss of earnings and for medical expenses. Asheri holds they may not. There is an array of authorities both ways in this controversy. Since nowadays there is a tendency to expand the jurisdiction of the Beit Din, I would say that the non-ordained judges should have jurisdiction when a person who has been assaulted sues the assaulter for loss of earnings and medical expenses.

In contrast to the preceding dispute, there is unanimity of opinion among the authorities in damage cases where the defendant is the indirect cause of the damages. It is agreed that non-ordained judges do have jurisdiction to render judgments in such cases.

A person may cause damage in three ways. First, one may be the direct cause of the damage, that is, that a person or his instrumentality may commit an act which results in injury. For example, setting fire to another person's house. Second, one may be the indirect cause of the damage, that is a person

or his instrumentality may commit an act which will ultimately, in the nature of things, cause injury. Such as burning a promissory note. Third, one may be the remote cause of the damage, that is a person or his instrumentality may commit such an act which in itself does not result in damage but which involves an intervening person or that becomes the cause of the damage, such as hiring a false witness. The Talmud relates a case which illustrates the second type of damage, indirect and which confirms the view that non-ordained judges do have jurisdiction over such cases. (T. Baba Kama 98b) A certain teacher in the Talmud, in his youth burned a note of indebtedness belonging to someone else. He was directed to make good the damages sustained by the holder of the note, who could no longer collect from the debtor since the note, the sole evidence of the indebtedness was destroyed by fire. The burner was liable for the indirect damage he had caused. Since the event occurred when ordination was no longer practiced, one can conclude that the non-ordained judges have jurisdiction over cases arising from indirect damages.

The subject matter of this lesson is more fully discussed in Vol. 1, Chapter 1 of Jewish Jurisprudence by Emanuel Quint and Neil Hecht. Copies of both volumes can be purchased at local Judaica bookstores. Questions to quint@inter.net.il

TANACH

Religious and Ethical Challenges of Money [5] by Dr. Meir Tamari

Having finished his presentation of Yosef and his Brothers, Dr. Tamari is returning to the topic he presented during the Yamim Nora'im. After several weeks, he will IY"H resume with "B'reishit".

QUESTION: "Reuven is an employee of Shimon's and a major part of his job is traveling abroad on his behalf. Resulting from Reuven's travels there are now accumulated mileage points that the airlines give to their frequent fliers. These give reduced fares or even free flights to the beneficiary and my question is to whom does the mileage points and thus the benefits accrue; to the owner or to the employee whose flights earned them? Would your answer be different if Reuven advanced the funds for the tickets, to be reimbursed later by Shimon"?

ANSWER: "You may consider this to be similar to the case in which the seller gives a present to the buyer (Ketubot 96b). There we make a difference between those instances where the seller is selling at a definite fixed price or conditions, and those instances where everything fluctuates. In the latter case, the gift belongs to whoever provided the funds and so is the cause of the whole transaction. In the former case it belongs to the employer, since one is not allowed to profit from some one's money or from their name without compensating them (Rabbi Yitschak Alfasi, Fez, N. Africa, 1013-1103). However, according to the Shulchan Arukh (Choshen Mishpat 183:6), if the agent advanced the funds, they should divide the gift, since although he owns the money that made the sale possible, the agent generated the transaction.

However, our case has no resemblance to that discussion. The benefit given by the airlines is a condition of the sale and so is something known and fixed. [It is not meant as a gift but is tantamount to a reduction in price and so is a condition of the

sale]. Therefore, it belongs to the one who generates that sale, in this case, Shimon." [Teshuvot Shevet Levi 308; Rabbi S. Wozner, Bnei Brak].

The whole nature of benefits to employees, managers, agents and consumers, raises a host of ethical issues and this seems the place to raise them even when we do not always have legal answers, as we had in regard to the mileage benefits.

Gifts given to buying agents or to public sector employees and elected officials who determine the allocation of permits, licenses or the participation in public works, are often nothing more than bribes. So too, private gifts to teachers.

Benefits to consumers are essentially a form of [non-price] competition and are halachically permitted in all those cases where competition is fair. "Rabbi Yehuda holds that there is an element of robbery in benefits given by a storekeeper, as their whole purpose is to steal or entice away consumers. The Rabbis argue that it is not unfair or fraudulent as all parties can easily duplicate or substitute these benefits" (Bava Metzia 4:12). However, all agree that they are not permitted where they cannot be duplicated by the competitors, as, for instance, where one can sell cheaper or can offer other benefits, only because he is illegally avoiding conditions imposed by an outside factor such as V.A.T. or import duties. This would also apply to those not having the required licenses such as taxi medallions or academic accreditation.

There is a further ethical issue of fraud and theft when the employee or agent abuses the benefit for their own purposes or profit. From the Torah, workers can eat from the produce that they were working with (D'varim 23:25-26); that in subsistence economies was a great social benefit. However, they may not abuse that right, take it home or give it to members of their family; that would be fraud. Many of the perks enjoyed by workers today pose the same problem. Where it is left to them, workers able to buy their own tickets all too often will buy the most expensive ones earning mileage benefits at the employer's expense, and then using that benefit for themselves. Owner-managers in closely-held or family held firms usually draw their return on capital in non-dividend forms in the form of expenses, registered in the firm's accounts as tax deductible business expenses, but actually private benefits of travel, entertainment, etc.; these in addition to inflated salaries. They thereby defraud not only the tax authorities but also other share-holders who, not being active in the daily running of the firm, are unable to benefit from these non-dividend forms of profit distribution. In managerial remuneration, in large listed corporations, managers often set their own salaries or grant themselves perks such as costly headquarters or costly artwork and expensive office furnishings, ostensibly for the firm's benefit but often for their own prestige and benefit; all of these are a reduction in the shareholders profits that the shareholders are usually powerless to decide. Stock options not geared to increased profits or output too, have an ethical problem of theft, since they are meant to give the employees an incentive to work, something for which they already were paid a salary to do.

Regarding the legitimate benefits or perks given to employees, we would have to decide whether they are to the employees benefit or not; in the latter case they would be forbidden. The Talmud permits payment of debts in near money, when the debtor has run out of cash, since the creditor can easily and at no cost realize the alternative forms of payment. This included payments in kind like immovable property, spices that were

rare and costly, camels and cloths etc (Baba Kama 7a and 14b). This was not allowed in the case of wages; these had to be in paid in cash. This ruling was based on the assumption that the workers would suffer a loss in money or time if they had to sell the goods that were paid in lieu of wages. Therefore, we may conclude that whenever the benefits or perks involve the recipients in a present or future loss, real or only anticipated, then they would be forbidden.

19th century industry in the U.K. and the U.S.A. was often based in company towns where the workers not only lived in housing belonging to the employers but bought in their stores, sent the children to be educated in their schools, read their newspapers and, as often as not, voted as they were told. Where the stock options, pension benefits, corporate cars, vacation facilities and liberal health schemes that are common all over the world are not transferable, the employees often find themselves in a golden cage that makes mobility almost impossible. It is doubtful whether Judaism that teaches that Jews are servants only to G-d, could approve such servitude.

MISC section - contents:

- [1] Vebbe Rebbe
- [2] Candle by Day
- [3] From Aloh Naaleh
- [4] Wisdom and Wit
- [5] Portion from the Portion
- [6] Parsha Points to Ponder
- [7] Torah from Nature
- [8] Torah KidBits
- [9] Tribal Names
- [10] From the desk of the director

[1] From the virtual desk of the OU

VEBBE REBBE

The Orthodox Union – via its website – fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and the Israel Center. The following is a Q&A from Eretz Hemdah...

Q My car slipped off the road and starting rolling down a hill in a wooded area and was stopped by a tree after two tumbles. I was belted in and, baruch Hashem, escaped with only mild bruises. I said Hagomel (blessing after surviving a potentially life-threatening situation). Should I be making the b'racha for experiencing a neis (miracle) when I pass the place of the accident?

A First, if you are Ashkenazi, you properly said Hagomel, as one makes the b'racha on any life-threatening situation (Mishna Berura 219:32). A S'faradi would make the b'racha without Hashem's Name as it is not one of the four classic scenarios mentioned in the Mishna (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 219:9). You would do well to find additional ways to thank Hashem, including giving tzedaka (see Mishna Berura 218:32). We too join in giving praise to Hashem for looking out for you and to you for looking out for yourself by wearing a seat belt. Now, to your question.

The Mishna (B'rachot 54a) instructs to recite a b'racha (Birkat haNeis) when seeing a place where miracles happened to Bnei Yisrael. The Gemara extends this idea to an individual, who recites "she'asa li neis bamakom hazeh" at a place he was personally saved by a miracle. It presents three stories of rabbis who did so after the following miracles: being saved from a lion, having a hole suddenly appear in a wall enabling escape from a crazed animal, and having a spring suddenly appear in the desert to save him from the thirst.

The Abudarham (cited by Beit Yosef, OC 218) says that this b'racha applies only to salvation in a manner that defies the laws of nature. According to this opinion, you would not need to make the b'racha. Although dangerous, it is not out of the ordinary to survive such an accident in reasonable health. The Shulchan Aruch (218:9), after bringing this opinion, also cites an opinion that requires a b'racha for one who was saved even in a natural manner.

The Magen Avraham (ad loc.:12) says that he is unaware of any such second opinion. Many discuss whether the Rivash (#337, cited by the Beit Yosef, OC 219) is that second opinion. The Abudarham views Hagomel and Birkat HaNeis as mutually exclusive. The former is for normal extrication from potentially dangerous situations; the latter is for miraculous salvation. In contrast, the Rivash sees them as complementary. Hagomel is said before a minyan once soon after being saved; Birkat HaNeis is said when one passes the place of the neis in the future. In any case, the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) concludes that one who is saved in a normal fashion would do well to recite the b'racha's essence without Hashem's Name.

The GR"A (ad loc.) asks against the opinion that requires a b'racha on any salvation, that if this is so, a woman who gave birth or a person who was seriously sick should have to recite it. The Bi'ur Halacha (ad loc.) responds that no one requires a Birkat HaNeis for cases where most people survive (e.g, birth). In other words, the reason to call a natural event a miracle, and not good luck, is the fact that one was saved from a situation that usually results in death.

Thus, we summarize as follows. You certainly should not make the Birkat HaNeis with a b'racha. Regarding without a b'racha, it depends on whether most people who start rolling down a wooded hill at a slow speed with seat belts on are killed. We do not have statistics but would guess that it is quite common to survive such an accident but uncommon to escape at least moderate injuries. However, the only natural salvation that warrants birkat hanes is from death. If there was a serious chance of death but one that did not reach a majority, Hagomel is in order but the element of miracle is missing. However, it would not be inappropriate to recite Birkat HaNeis without Hashem's Name. Regarding some of the details of the b'racha, including who says it (his children) and how often (every 30 days), see Shulchan Aruch, OC 218.

Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of Hemdat Yamim, the weekly parsha sheet published by Eretz Hemdah. You can read this section or the entire Hemdat Yamim at www.ou.org or www.eretzhemdah.org. And/or you can receive Hemdat Yamim by email weekly, by sending an email to info@eretzhemdah.org with the message: *Subscribe/English (for the English version) or Subscribe/Hebrew (for the Hebrew version)*. Please leave the subject blank. Ask the Vebbe Rebbe is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel

[2] Candle by Day

A performance deteriorates once the emphasis shifts from giving a great performance to being a great performer.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World Of Chazal by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein • Now available at 054-209-9200

[3] CHIZUK and IDUD

for Olim & not-yet-Olim respectively

Rashi (28:10) tells us how Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva effected the community around him. But he does not tell us how Yaakov himself felt.

Ya'akov was certainly frightened by the prospect of leaving the safe environs of his father's house and the holiness of Eretz Israel. But as Abarbanel points out, God assured Yaakov that he would be able to maintain his high level of holiness even in Charan, and that he would indeed return to Eretz Israel.

In his famous dream, Yaakov saw angels ascending and descending. One would think that that if the angels come from Heaven they should first descend and then ascend. Rashi, quoting the Midrash, explains that the Torah is speaking of two different groups of angels: those of Eretz Israel ascended because Yaakov was leaving the Holy Land and those of Chutz la-Aretz descended to accompany him outside the Land. Abarbanel points out that the angels from Eretz Israel were superior to the angels in Chutz la-Aretz and that this was God's way of reminding Yaakov that he must return to Eretz Yisrael, which is on a higher spiritual level.

We know that one can achieve levels of spirituality and Torah learning in Chutz la-Aretz. But God taught Yaakov Avinu that the levels one can achieve in Eretz Israel are higher. As R. Yehuda HaLevi says in the Kuzari (II,12), just as a vineyard can only flourish in a place having the proper conditions and climate, so can a nation only flourish spiritually in its own land.

Yaakov understood God's message and took an oath that should God sustain him during his stay in Charan, he would return to his father's house in Eretz Israel. Yaakov, as we know, did return. We pray that we all be privileged to return to the home of our forefathers in Eretz Israel.

Rabbi Aharon Angstreich, Jerusalem

TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat HaShavu'a

[4] Wisdom & Wit

Two Jews - one religious and the other not - came to R' Chaim Leib Rottenburg, the Rav of Stavisk, to settle a complex business matter. After hearing both sides, the Rav ruled in favor of the non-religious Jew. The religious Jew refused to accept the verdict and would not pay the amount he had been assessed as owing. Furthermore, he was incensed that the Rav would rule in favor of a person who did not keep the mitzvot, against one who did.

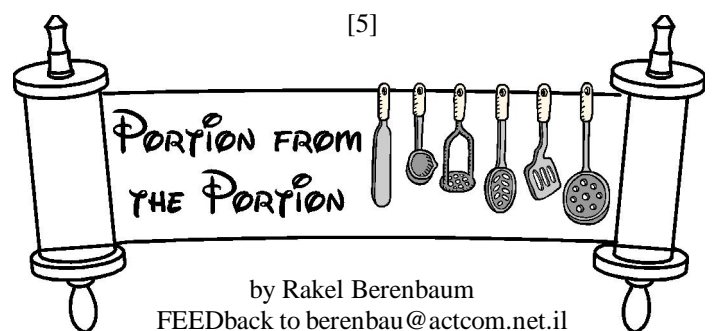
Upon hearing this declaration, R' Chaim Leib told the non-religious Jew: "As I see that I was unable to have my verdict enforced, I hereby give you permission to file your complaint in the secular courts, something generally forbidden in cases between two Jews. Furthermore, should this case go to court, I am prepared to appear as a witness on your behalf."

When the case was finally called, there was a high probability that it might be scheduled for Shavuot. R' Chaim Leib stated that if the date of the case would indeed be on Shavuot, he would stay in the town where the case was to be heard over Shavu'os, so that he could appear before the court.

Many of the residents of Stavisk thought that their rav's position was scandalous - to appear in a court on Shavuot, and to do so yet for a Jew who did not observe the mitzvot!

R' Chaim Leib told his community: "What I am doing is specifically what Chazal tell us must be done. On the verse (Sh'mot 23:6), "You shall not pervert the judgement of the poor" Chazal state specifically that this refers to a person who is "poor in mitzvos." Thus, by Torah law, I am obliged as much in this case as in any other to seek justice for the innocent party."

Shmuel Himelstein has written a wonderful series for ArtScroll: Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit; A Touch of Wisdom, A Touch of Wit; and "Wisdom and Wit" — available at your local Jewish bookstore (or should be). Excerpted with the permission of the copyright holder



BEIT EL a.k.a LUZ

Yaakov awoke from his sleep and realized that he was in a special place. He changed the name of the place from LUZ to BEIT EL (Hashem's Temple). In numerous places in the Bible, when it refers to BEIT EL, it reminds us that it used to be called LUZ. Maybe this is because the city LUZ was a very well known city or maybe there was something special about it. For example the Meam Lo'ez says the city got its original name because of the large LUZ tree that had a hole in its trunk, through which people entered the city.

But maybe there is some lesson that the Torah is trying to teach us by repeating to us the fact that the city which is now called BEIT EL was once called LUZ. The MIDRASH

HAGADOL sees a play on words in the name of the city. It was called LUZ because the people used to NILUZ, stray from the way of HASHEM, but now it would be called the house of HASHEM.

Yaakov is able to bring out the potential for holiness that was hidden within LUZ. His resting in that place and recognizing G-d's presence there changed it from being an ordinary city to the "house of G-d". We all must try to turn our surrounding LUZes into BEIT ELs.

#####

Next week I will be walking on Melabev's third annual walkathon [www.friendsofmelabev.com] in the south of the country. The purpose of the walk is to raise needed funds so Melabev can continue to do their holy work in bringing out the hidden potentials of people with Alzheimer's disease. Anyone who is interested in helping this worthy cause can sponsor me at

securewn.com/melabevssl/contribute_form.asp

LUZ is either a hazelnut or an almond. Here is a recipe that could be made with either of these type of nuts.

RICE and NUTS

- 1 cup whole grain rice
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup hazelnuts or almonds
- 1/2 tsp. Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. Nutmeg
- 1/2 cup raisins
- salt & pepper to taste

Make the rice. Fry the onions until golden, add nuts and spices and fry one minute. Add to the cooked rice.

[6] Parsha Points to Ponder

VAYEITZEI

1) Why does Yaakov refer to the strangers he met at the well as MY BROTHERS (ACHAI), a term usually reserved in the Torah for people who one already knows and recognizes? (See 29:4)

2) Why does the Torah have to specifically state AND SHE STOPPED GIVING BIRTH after Leah gave birth to Yehuda? (29:35) Wouldn't we have figured this out on our own from the fact that the Torah would not continue describing any further births?

3) Why did G-D command Yaakov to RETURN TO THE LAND OF YOUR FATHERS (31:3) from where the Jews would then have to be exiled to Egypt? Why didn't G-D have Yaakov remain where he was in exile and count the previous 20 years of Yaakov's sojourn there towards our required time in exile?

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS

Ponder the questions first, then read here

1) Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky answers this question based on the teaching of the Midrash quoted by Rashi (29:7), that Yaakov rebuked the people he met at the well regarding their work ethic and responsibility. Since Yaakov wanted his rebuke to be effective, he first endeared himself to these people by referring to them as MY BROTHERS. Once this positive connection was made, he could rebuke them in an effective manner.

2) Rav Gifter suggests that the Torah is describing a deliberate decision by G-D not to continue blessing Leah with children at that point. Why? The first part of that very verse provides the answer. Leah's language in naming Yehuda - NOW I MUST GIVE THANKS TO G-D - implied that there was no obligation to thank G-D for her other births. On the heels of Leah's declaration, we are told that SHE STOPPED HAVING CHILDREN, as a measure for measure punishment for implying a lack of appreciation for G-D's blessing her with all of her children.

3) The Chofetz Chayim deduces from this that it would have been far worse for the Jews to experience exile in the midst of a nation of relatives. Leading us to exile in Egypt where we were strangers among foreigners insured that we would remain a distinct people and, eventually, be redeemed. Exile among relatives risked that we would become completely assimilated and never merit redemption.

Parsha Points to Ponder is prepared by Rabbi Dov Lipman, who teaches at Reishit Yerushalayim, Tiferet, and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh and RBS and is the author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith", just re-published by Feldheim ppp@israelcenter.co.il

[8] Torah from Nature • Chinchilla

Small, South American squirrel-like rodent... 2 species... closely related to viscacha. Because its fur is one of the costliest in the world, the (wild) chinchilla was almost hunted into extinction... today, protected by law, and raised in captivity... highest hair density of any land mammal, more than 20,000 hairs per sq.cm. Where humans grow one hair from each follicle, a chinchilla has more than fifty hairs from a single follicle... females are larger than males... breed any time of the year... intelligent creatures... can be taught tricks... considered by linguists to have an aural range of perception closest to that of a human... agile jumpers, nocturnal, vegetarian, dust rollers...



A new Torah Tidbits column with a Parshat HaShavua insight geared towards the young reader... or their parents and grandparents to read to them.

Parshat Vayeitzei begins with Yaakov Avinu's journey to faraway Charan. It is a dark, difficult journey. He is leaving his parents, his home, Eretz Yisrael behind. His grandfather Avraham also left parents and homeland, but he was going to something holy and good. Yaakov is leaving all the good things behind and is going to the house of Lavan the idol worshipper - not exactly a holy place!

He leaves Be'er Sheva and reaches a "place" - the same holy "place" where Avraham brought Yitzchak for the Akeida. Later, the Beit Hamikdash would be built on that "place". What did Yaakov do there? The day was ending, the sun had just set and before lying down to sleep, he prayed.

All three Avot prayed. That's why we pray three times a day. Avraham prayed the first Shacharit - the morning prayer. Avraham was like the rising sun, the beginning of a new day. He was the first to bring the light of Hashem to the world and to fight against belief in idols. He was honored as a prince of G-d.

Yitzchak prayed the first Mincha - the afternoon prayer, when the sun is lower in the sky. Like the afternoon, the light in Yitzchak's life was dimmer. His neighbors were jealous of his successes and forced him to move from place to place. They fought with him and filled his wells with rocks and stones. Even his sons caused him sorrow. Esav was unworthy of the firstborn blessing; Yaakov ran away to Charan. Yitzchak was a man for Mincha.

Yaakov prayed the first Maariv - the evening prayer. His life was full of shadows and hardships. He feared his brother Esav. He was forced to run away to Lavan. He worked seven years in order to marry Rachel, but instead was given Leah. He worked seven more years for Rachel. Lavan cheated him time and time again. When he finally returned to Eretz Yisrael, Rachel died. Then his daughter Dina was kidnapped by the son of Shechem. And perhaps worst of all, his beloved Yosef disappeared, supposedly killed. Yaakov's life was dark and difficult. He prayed in the evening.

After his prayer, Yaakov lay down to sleep and had a wondrous dream. He saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven filled with angels going up and down. Then Hashem Himself stood above him and made him a shining promise. I am Hashem, the G-d of your father Avraham and the G-d of Yitzchak. I will give the land you are lying on to you and to your children... Behold I am with you and I shall guard you wherever you go, and I shall bring you back to this Land. I shall not leave you until I have fulfilled my promise to you.

Yaakov remembered that promise through all the dark years in Charan, and in the end, like all of G-d's promises to the Avot, it was fulfilled.

[9] **These are the names...**

Besides The Yehuda, there are four others in Tanach, incl. 2 Leviyim and a Benjaminite

There are also 4 other YOSEFs, besides the most famous one. Father of Yig'al, leader of Yissacher, and in Tanach, a Kohen, a Levi, and one other, tribe unknown.

There are other Shimons, Yissachars, and Binyamins (1,1,3 respectively).

Reuven, Levi, Zevulun, Dan, Naftali, and Asher are one-of-a-kind in Tanach.

[11] **Divrei Menachem**

Parshat Vayeitzei advances the story of Yaakov's drawn-out sojourn with his father-in-law Lavan, including the description of how Yaakov outwitted Lavan's schemes to deprive him of his rightful wages at the end of twenty years of hard labor.

Once Rachel gave birth to Yosef, Yaakov indicates to Lavan that it is time for his family to return to his birthplace. And with the bitter complaints of Lavan's sons ringing in his ears and the end of his long-suffering days and nights in sight, Yaakov's determination to return to the land of his fathers was clearly reinforced.

Moreover, the Torah describes how Lavan's attitude towards Yaakov changed for the worse as Yaakov finally acquired wealth, seemingly at his father-in-law's expense. Finally, however, it is Hashem who instructs Yaakov to return to his native land. And at this point, we would have expected Yaakov to do so without any further ado.

Yet Yaakov consults with his wives. He reviews their situation and how Hashem's beneficence was bestowed upon them in the face of their father's dishonesty. Then, invoking Hashem's previous promise to protect him (B'reishit 28:13), Ya'akov then introduces the divine decree to "leave this land". From which we see the necessity of sometimes making Hashem's bidding palatable to others in ways that are both rationally and emotionally acceptable.

Shabbat Shalom, Menachem Persoff

Towards Better Davening and Torah Reading

מִשְׁנָה

Yaakov Avinu's dream of the Ladder, caused him to awake "FROM HIS SLEEP", mish (and drag the SHIN a bit) sh'na-TO. Because of the DAGESH CHAZAK in the SHIN, the SH'VA under it is NA. This is as opposed to mish-na-TO, his "mishna", his learning. This is an example of a word whose meaning changes if one NACHs the SH'VA NA.

SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH...

A series of articles on Beit HaMikdash-related topics by Catriel Sugarman intended to increase the knowledge, interest, and anticipation of the reader, thereby hastening the realization of our hopes and prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash.

Distance Education in the Mikdash! [2]

Anyone who was anyone in the Mikdash community was jammed into the cavernous Mikdash conference room on Har Habayit. Even the Kohein Gadol was sitting in his place of honor. Standing room only, there was a real air of excitement and anticipation as the spacious room filled up. The Segan and Meir Hakohein were seated at the head of the table. A number of chairs near the head of the table had been left vacant for the guests of honor, the members of the Mikdash Committee for Distance Education (MCDE). Everyone was interested in hearing the preliminary report of the pilot study examining the utilization of the internet to expand the Mikdash's role as the primary Jewish educational center.

When Chaya Devora and her staff entered the room, they were promptly shown to their seats. Rising to acknowledge the presence of the newcomers, the Segan then turned to the assemblage and said, "Birshut Hakohein Hagadol, Birshut Hakohanim Hamechubadim, Birshut Rabanan Verabotai, and honored guests. Two years ago, various members of the Mikdash Computer Department together with my old friend Meir Hakohein and I were introduced to Chaya Devora, distance education expert. Meeting in her office, we asked her if the new developing technologies available for distance education could somehow be exploited to deepen the connection between the Beit Hamikdash and Kohanim residing abroad. We noted that even Mikdash- Shlichim confessed to a certain disconnection with the Mikdash while they were serving in Chutz La'aretz. We wanted to create a 'worldwide Mikdash community' and we wanted to convey the Chavaya - the ambiance - of the Mikdash to Am Yisrael in Chutz La'aretz and as much as possible make the Mikdash part of their daily lives. Somehow, we felt that the Mikdash was not living up to its responsibility as the premier educational institution of Am Yisrael. However, as a result of that meeting, we established the MCDE. Under Chaya Devora's guidance, the committee initiated a study to examine the feasibility of using distance education to maintain contact with Kohanim in Chu"l. The Segan concluded, "I now give the floor to Chaya Devora."

Chaya Devora rose and explained that there are two kinds of distance education, synchronous and asynchronous. In synchronous distance education (SDL), those registered in an on-line course simultaneously log into the same site and listen to the teacher 'together' even though they are physically in different locations. An asynchronous setup, on the other hand is more flexible and easier to set up and run. Participants log in at their own convenience and download previously uploaded materials. "We soon realized in that designing a system to meet the needs of the Mikdash community, we needed a system that incorporates both methodologies, synchronous and asynchronous. We decided to start 'small', an on-line Shi'ur for 20 students from Chu"l, the Magid Shi'ur would broadcast from the Beit Midrash Hagadol on Har Habayit. We - the MCDE - placed a small ad in the on-line publication Mikdash Tidbits. Furnishing all the relevant details, we said that we were organizing an on-line synchronous distance education Shi'ur

featuring an introduction to Avoda 101, and that it would 'meet' three times a week. We also explained that each student from Chu"l would be paired with an age-background matched student from the Beit Midrash Hagadol on Har Habayit and before each Shi'ur, they would be expected to prepare together using SKYPE. We thought that it was vital that the 'Chulnikim' have an opportunity to learn with a Chevruta from the Mikdash community.

"We did not know what kind of a response we would get but we needn't have worried. Within TWO days, we had enough applicants to fill two Shi'urim! However, we did not lack problems. We realized that students who study at a distance are separated both from their teachers and from their peers. For some this can be a particular problem, and for all, the separation poses potential difficulties. To a great extent, social interaction, the sharing of ideas, discoveries, successes and failures, and general social support, are missing from the distance-learning environment. Therefore, the role of the Magid Shi'ur is crucial. He must address many of the problems noted, by mixing and matching techniques, creating and maintaining a stimulating environment, and offering opportunities for students to communicate with each other and with him on a regular basis. 'E-moderators' need to know when to 'stand back' and let students discuss, and when to intervene to change the direction or introduce new ideas. The Magid Shi'ur will also need to change his traditional role as well. Many 'remote students' need a great deal of social support, and distance educators may be tempted to spending more time offering one-to-one tutorials and less time lecturing, to the detriment of the other students in the Shi'ur. We also realized that some teachers feel threatened by the introduction of new technologies and methods since Magidei Shi'ur who practice distance education methods will soon discover that they need to develop a new set of skills if they are to be effective educators. For this reason, we did not find it easy to recruit suitable Magidei Shi'ur at first. Fortunately, in the end, we did find a number of wonderful Magidei Shi'ur who came to understand that distance education was an excellent opportunity to provide quality- learning opportunities for those who were physically but not spiritually distant from the Mikdash." The people in the conference room were fascinated.

"Well before the date of the Shi'ur, we sent an email to every participant explaining how to download a short PowerPoint video from the Mikdash distance-learning site instructing him how to use the Shi'ur program. Before the first Shi'ur, Yehuda, our technical consultant, held a 'dress rehearsal'. Each student (taking account the various time zones) was invited to log in to the Mikdash distance learning site at a specific date and time. Then Yehuda ascertained that each student could hear and see him and that, he, in turn, could hear and see them. (Each student sat before a webcam at home.) Baruch Hashem, the first Shi'ur was an unqualified success, the Magid Shi'ur turned out to be a 'natural'. Entranced, the students participated enthusiastically. All of us, Yehuda, the Magid Shi'ur and the students were simply amazed how smoothly things worked in the end. After the Shi'ur ended, we emailed questionnaires to all the participants to get reactions. However, before we even had a chance to collate and analyze the results, we were inundated with emails from young Kohanim in Chu"l requesting to be permitted to join the Shi'ur. First the emails were from acquaintances of the participants, but it did not take long until vast numbers of emails started arriving from non-Kohanim, eager to share in the Chavaya of the Mikdash."

Smiling, Chaya Devorah said, "We were on our way!"

<to be continued>

Catriel's book in progress: The Temple of Jerusalem, A Pilgrim's Perspective; A Guided Tour through the Temple and the Divine Service

from page 3 PARSHA PIX

How do we know that Yaakov Avinu wore a Kipa? Vayeitzei Yaakov, and Yaakov went out... Would he go out without a kipa?! Old joke, represented by the KIPA

The road sign could have been at the side of the road that Yaakov traveled at the beginning of Vayeitzei, with Be'er Sheva behind him and Charan still to come. En route, Yaakov encounters "The Place" where he spent the night and had his famous dream.

Speaking of which, there's the rock he put by his head and the ladder standing on the ground climbing heavenward.

U'FARATZTA, and you shall spread out in all directions, is represented by the compass.

Yaakov promised to give G-d (so to speak) MAASER, one tenth, .1

There are 10 babies in cradles, with an 11th one facing the other direction (for Dina) and then a 12th one in the boy direction, for Yosef.

The plant above Yaakov's pillow-rock (also the rock he moved from the mouth of the well) is a mandrake, the DUDA'IM that Reuven collected for his mother.

There are two of the sticks Yaakov used to induce the production of the striped, speckled, and plain sheep and goats.

Ice cream, G'LIDA, which is the Targum of KERACH in Yaakov's tirade about his cold nights spent watching over Lavan's flocks.

The Torah Tidbits logo with a thumbs up signal is for Lavan's endorsement - TOV T.T.

The sine wave is a GAL (not the English gal, the Hebrew for wave), as in the pile of rocks at the end of the sedra.

Philadelphia Phillies cap. That team has the ignoble honor of being the losingest team in Major League Baseball. And it goes one step further. They are the losingest team in major league sports (in the US, counting baseball, football, basketball, and ice hockey.) Perhaps, then, they are the modern incarnation of the teams that did play in LUZ. [To be fair to the town of LUZ (Beit El), it is only in TTriddle-land that there is an association with the English word LOSE. LUZ is the hazel tree, one of the sticks that Yaakov used in Vayeitzei at the behest of the angel... LUZ is also the name of the vertebra at the top of the spinal column that is associated with the starting point of T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM. Go Phillies!]

Staying with sports, we also have a South Park figure playing dodgeball. (We know it's hard to tell what he's doing.) This is similar to the game MACHANAYIM, as in the concluding word of Parshat Vayeitzei, referring to the

twin camps of angels that Yaakov saw upon his return to Eretz Yisrael.

There is a matador waving his red cape at - not a bull, but a pair of lips. As in the haftara, UNSHA-L'MA FARIM S'FATEINU, and our lips (voices in prayer) will replace the bulls (sacrifices).

TTRIDDLES...

are Torah Tidbits-style riddles on Parshat HaShavua (sometimes on the calendar). They are found in the hard-copy of TT scattered throughout, usually at the bottom of different columns. In the electronic versions of TT, they are found all together at the end of the ParshaPix-TTriddles section. The best solution set submitted each week (there isn't always a best) wins a double prize a CD from Noam Productions and/or a gift (game, puzzle, book, etc.) from Big Deal.

Last issue's (TO-L'DOT) TTriddles:

[1] Not a cheap handgun easily obtained and concealed, but...

"A cheap handgun easily obtained and concealed" is the definition of the colloquial term, "Saturday night special". But not for us. For us, in the context of Parshat Toldot, our Motza'ei Shabbat special is the widely neglected, but beautiful prayer at the end of Maariv, whose opening pasuk comes from Yitzchak's first bracha to Yaakov - V'YITEN L'CHA HA-ELOKIM...

[2] 1904-10 Ave. N, 78-15 Parsons Blvd...

Answer: TORAS EMES (a.k.a. Torat Emat). That's a phrase found in the haftara of Toldot. That is its only occurrence in Tanach. The first version of this TTriddle just had the first address in Brooklyn and the words, among others. However, after discussing the TTriddle with someone, it was discovered that different people associate Toras Emes with different places. A search of the internet - using Toras Emes, Torat Emet, and Torath Emeth - uncovered many yeshivot and shuls with that name, as well as Torah publications. So we settled on the address of the Brooklyn yeshiva and the address of a shul in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens, NY. The ellipsis (the tree dots at the end of the TTriddle) indicates and here represents the many other Toras Emes institutions that come to your minds, dear TTreaders, as you read these words. (Montreal, Miami, Columbus, et al.) [Did you know that et al means "and others"? Yes, you say? But did you know that it is an abbreviation for the Latin "et alii"?)]

[3] could 2612 have been in 5634?

B'reishit 26:12 translates as: Then Isaac sowed in that land, AND REAPED IN THE SAME YEAR A HUNDREDFOLD; and HaShem blessed him. The phrase in uppercase letters can read - in TTriddle translation - And he founded in that year Me'ah She'arim. That sh'chuna (neighborhood) is one of the oldest "extramural" neighborhoods, having been established in the year 5634, a.k.a. 1874 c.e.

[4] demitasse spoon last week; pygmy marmoset this week - sort of

The demitasse spoon pictured in last week's ParshaPix, represented the little KAF (letter of the Alef-Bet and also Hebrew for spoon) in the word from the beginning of Chayei Sara, V'LIVkOTAH. In To-l'dot, we find a small KUF in Rivka's statement kATZTI B'CHAYAI. (KUF, the letter, sort of sounds like KOF, which means monkey. The KUF looks a little like a monkey too.) The pygmy marmoset is the smallest monkey species in the world, weighing a little over 100g and being as long as a closed Torah Tidbits is wide (not counting the tail). It is native to the rainforest canopies in parts of South America.

[5] 1 of 39, Eisav (Yaakov) and who?

1 of 39 refers to one of the 39 categories of Melacha forbidden on Shabbat - specifically, TZAD, hunting. The word TZAYID (or TZEID) occurs only 10 times in Tanach, 8 of which are in the book of B'reishit. Two (actually 3) people are associated with TZAYID in the Torah. The first is Nimrod (he's the who in the TTriddle). He is called GIBOR TZAYID twice. The other is Eisav, "a man who knows the hunt" (was a skillful hunter). When Eisav returns with food for Yitzchak, Yitzchak realizes that it was someone else who had already brought him food, and he asks, "Who then is he who hunted venison?" So Yaakov too is associated with TZAYID.

This week's TTriddles:

- [1] his name's meaning accompanies not just his birth**
- [2] Happy Something**
- [3] Alternate ending of 2810: And you get 392**
- [4] You never saw a purple cow. What about pinque sheep?**